

## **Tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*)**

**Louisiana Office of Public Health Laboratory Services (LA SPHL) (504) 568-5371 or (504) 568-8102, 24 Hour Pager (504) 374-6669 or (877) 309-2867**

**Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology  
(800) 256-2748 (24 hours)**

Remember that these samples may be highly infective! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.

### **Specimen Collection and Transport**

#### **Clinical:**

Tissue samples from humans (or animals) must be submitted frozen on dry ice (-30 to -70°C.) Best samples for testing include liver, spleen, lungs or lymph node. If pneumonic tularemia is suspected, collect a sputum or bronchial/tracheal wash. Specimens can be placed into any sterile container that seals well. Blood can also be cultured, but is seldom positive.

#### **Reference cultures:**

The LA SPHL can also confirm or identify any organism isolated from another laboratory, which is suspected of being *F. tularensis*. Reference cultures should be submitted on an enriched chocolate slant.

#### **Environmental samples:**

At this time environmental sampling, if performed, would be situation specific. No standardized testing procedures are available. Consult the LA SPHL.

#### **Testing available:**

Culture, isolate identification, Direct Fluorescent Antibody (DFA), real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), and rapid antigen detection by Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF).

**Reporting:**

**All reporting times are the minimum time. Any individual specimen could take longer.**

*F. tularensis* is a very slow-growing organism. Primary isolation from a clinical specimen may take 3-5 days. The LA SPHL can perform a DFA and TRF directly on tissue specimens. This could be completed within 6-8 hours after receipt of the specimen in the lab. Confirmation of a suspect organism isolated at another laboratory by DFA and TRF can be completed within 6 hours of receipt in the LA SPHL.